



"If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquility of servitude than the animated contest of freedom, go from us in peace. We ask not your counsels or arms. Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you. May your chains sit lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that you were our countrymen!" – Samuel Adams

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Mists Clearing from Death Panel Reality

By Bob Ellis on May 28th, 2010



During last year's protracted debate about the **unconstitutional** government health care bill, opponents could see from a mile away the groundwork for **rationing** and "death panels" in the legislation.

How could these people be so sure? Because **rationing**—both **direct** and **indirect**—happens in **virtually every government** health care system in the world.

It's a simple fact when the government becomes a major or sole payer in a health care system that, in order to stop the fiscal hemorrhaging that always comes with a system where people get things for "free," government bureaucrats have to decide, individually or in groups, who gets treated and who doesn't. There simply isn't enough money to treat everyone for everything. Even socialists understand you can only burden down the unwashed masses with so much taxation before their back is broken and the whole ponzi scheme collapses.

One of the most noted government health care systems in the world is the UK National Health Service; I had the unpleasant experience of living under this system for three years in the late 1980s.

Surely the abysmal state of the UK system couldn't happen here in the U.S., says American socialists! Riiight. We are so much smarter than the British, we couldn't possibly make the same mistakes they have...even though we are virtually walking in their footsteps on the road to ruin.

A couple of weeks ago, I **pointed out** that President Barack Obama's **nominee** for administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Donald Berwick, is infatuated with the British NHS. He thinks it's far better even than sliced bread.

Michael Tanner from the **Cato Institute** has put together a good analysis in the **Daily Caller** of some of the "joyous" aspects of the NHS...and sane persons can only shudder to think we will have the same "joyous" system here in the United States before long.

The **National Center for Policy Analysis** has summarized some of the most interesting parts:

- *Berwick was referring to a British health care system where 750,000 patients are awaiting admission to NHS hospitals.*
- *The government's official target for diagnostic testing was a wait of no more than 18 weeks by 2008.*
- *The reality doesn't come close; the latest estimates suggest that for most specialties, only 30 percent to 50 percent of patients are treated within 18 weeks.*
- *For trauma and orthopedics patients, the figure is only 20 percent.*
- *Overall, more than half of British patients wait more than 18 weeks for care.*
- *Every year, 50,000 surgeries are canceled because patients become too sick on the waiting list to proceed.*

If you're healthy, government health care isn't too bad. I was fortunate during my three years in England and only had to use it a handful of times. But of all my British friends, not a single one had anything good to say of the "free" health care system they payed for through their exorbitant taxes. Further, all indications are that the **Canadian** government health care system and **those** of other **countries** are really **no better**.

With waiting lists like these, you have death panels by default. Like good ole' evolutionary doctrine, the weak won't make it, and they'll save the taxpayers a lot of money in their dying.

Several states have filed a **lawsuit** to stop this unconstitutional abomination, and right now polls are looking good for the replacement of a huge number of these socialists in Washington D.C. in November so we can repeal this mess next year.

But neither the lawsuit nor the November election are a done-deal yet. The American people must stay focused and keep the pressure on—both on this current congress and to get constitutionally-loyal candidates elected in November.

This government health care scheme is un-American, and repeats the same mistakes made by socialists around the world. Americans who understand this must put hand to plow and keep it there until the job
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of correcting this mistake is done.

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dr. theo ★ 05/29/2010 08:26 AM

It is really simple economics. If a desirable commodity is free or perceived to be free the supply can never meet the demand. If everyone were guaranteed a new car you might think that at some point every one would have a new car and the demand would have been met. But that fails to take into account that some would think their new car not as nice as their neighbors, or his has nicer wheels or a better stereo. There would always be a demand for more and more.

The same is true of medical care. People would always believe that they are not getting their fair share and the demand would continue to rise. Just as is pointed out by Mr. Ellis at some point the authorities would have to step in and try to control the demand by limiting availability in one way or another. In the car analogy it might be a standard version with minimal amenities--same model, same features, same colors, same everything. That is how socialized medicine is done. They try to standardize everything to the point that the system is unable to meet individual needs, then when the costs reach breaking point the only choice is to ration care. And it is a truism that dead folks no longer put a burden on the health care system.

(Edited by author 3 days ago)



Julien 05/30/2010 09:14 AM in reply to dr. theo

I think your analogy with a car is not correct regarding health: nobody like to go to the doctor, or hospital just for the pleasure of the ride. Actually, in countries where there is a public health care (France, Germany, England...) most expenses are caused by the aging population who require long lasting expensive cares. Not by healthy individuals who enjoy spending time in doctor's offices "because it is free".

Besides, according to the WHO, "socialized" medicine do not rank so badly, with France and Italy at the top level (UK: 18th) while US is 37th according to a 2005 survey. Life expectancy (another way to assess the quality of a health care system) is also lower in the US (78 years) compared to countries with public health (France: 81, Italy: 79,9, UK: 78,7 according to CIA world factbook).

On the cost level, 15% of US GDP is spent on health care, while in european countries it ranges between 8% (UK) and 12% (France, Germany)...

Why is Bob only giving a testimony of what he saw 20 years ago in UK? Why not talking about public health care where it actually works well: in France, Italy or Japan for example.



Bob Ellis ★ 05/30/2010 12:18 PM in reply to Julien

I'll leave it to Dr. Theo to respond to most of it, but with regards to my experience with government health care systems, NHS has only gotten WORSE, not better.

That's the nature of all socialist ponzi schemes: sooner or later, you run out of money to rob from somebody else, and services go downhill...and down...and down...and down.



dr. theo ★ 05/30/2010 08:35 PM in reply to Julien

You are very naive, Julien. A large portion of health care costs are consumed by the relatively healthy population. I see dozens of patients every week with minor complaints that demand expensive tests and therapies when they have insurance or government coverage. These people often have a hidden agenda wanting drugs, time off from work, disability, etc. Anything to take advantage of the system.

Life expectancy is a very poor measure of health care. It is basically an average age of death of a population of people from all causes--accidents, disease, war, drugs, auto accidents, premature births, suicides, etc. Health care can effect only a small portion of the factors that impact life expectancy.

Health care costs in other countries is less than in America because they are willing to let people die without care to reduces costs. If that's what you want then that's what you'll get with Obamacare.



Julien 05/31/2010 01:35 AM in reply to dr. theo

Well I might be naive...However, if abuses certainly exist, it is pretty simple for a doctor to reduce them by refusing obviously useless treatments or drugs. This is actually what French and Italian doctors do (according to my experience): you won't get so easily time off from work (at least in France), or treatment you don't require...

"Life expectancy is a very poor measure of health care" You can also choose to take infant mortality, as an indicator of health care quality: it is still much higher in the US (6.8 per 1000) compared to UK (5.1), Germany (3.9) or Japan (2.8).

Actually, for most indicators used to assess the quality of health cares, US do not perform very well...

"Health care costs in other countries is less than in America because they are willing to let people die" I would be very interested in knowing your references for this affirmation. The only countries were I have heard or see such things happen were China (no money / no care, it's simple) and America (insurances denying treatments due to "pre-existing" conditions or "experimental" treatment), not western Europe.



dr. theo ★ 05/31/2010 03:36 PM in reply to Julien

I wonder, Julien, if you have read any news reports about health care in countries like Canada and Great Britain lately. It seems every week there is another major report about their failing systems,

many of which have been reported or discussed here at DV.

Here are a couple recent ones just for starters:

"In a letter to The Daily Telegraph, a group of experts who care for the terminally ill claim that some patients are being wrongly judged as close to death.

Under NHS guidance introduced across England to help doctors and medical staff deal with dying patients, they can then have fluid and drugs withdrawn and many [who might otherwise] be saved are put on continuous sedation until they pass away.

As a result the scheme is causing a "national crisis" in patient care."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/61...>

"Europe's survival rates [for cancer patients] are lower than in the US, where 66.3 per cent of men and 62.9 per cent of women survive for five years, compared with 47.3 per cent of European men and 55.8 per cent of women."

<http://politicalcalculations.blogspot.com/2007/...>

Yes, they do let patients die prematurely so as to reduce the costs to a system that is utterly broke.

Infant mortality rates, like life expectancy rates, are poor measures of quality or even availability of medical care. There are just too many other factors that weigh much more heavily on the situation. If you just read what wikipedia say about it you get an idea of the scope of the problem.

For instance this:

"Another challenge to comparability [between countries] is the practice of counting frail or premature infants who die before the normal due date as miscarriages (spontaneous abortions) or those who die during or immediately after childbirth as stillborn [in most European countries].

Therefore, the quality of a country's documentation of perinatal mortality can matter greatly to the accuracy of its infant mortality statistics."

In the US we have a high rate of premature births, largely the result of drug and alcohol use as well as fewer abortions. Further, we try to save them all, no matter how small or frail. Some die, raising our infant mortality rates, while in other countries they are never even counted as live births.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant_mortality

I really recommend that you read up on what these statistics really mean and how they are compiled. Do you know that on every death certificate in the US there is a question that doctors have to answer as to whether the deceased was pregnant or not? If yes, then that death is counted as a perinatal maternal death, implying to people like you that expectant mothers are dying at an alarming rate for lack of proper medical care, when in fact most die of car accidents, drug overdoses, unrelated medical conditions, violence, etc.

I believe you are probably a pretty smart guy, but your ignorance on this subject is profound.
(Edited by author 16 hours ago)



Julien Today 02:49 AM in reply to dr. theo

Actually what I was suggesting in my first comment was to enlarge the comparison for health care systems: instead of only discussing UK or canadian public health care, why not trying to learn some lessons from health care systems that are considered among the best? Like the public ones in France, Japan, Italy...

Besides, the link about infant mortality you provided

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant_mortality) clearly states:

"the report also concludes that the differences in reporting [infant mortality] are unlikely to be the primary explanation for the United States' relatively low international ranking. [10]"
Moreover, Germany, which counts infant mortality similarly to the US has a much lower rate (and a public health care system).

As you said, I am not a med. doctor, nor a specialist about health care systems. However, when you seek to improve something, common sense would dictate that you look at what's best in the world and try to learn some lessons from it... Not look at second rate solutions.




thisoldspouse Today 04:57 AM in reply to dr. theo

Health care, and any commodity in demand, will have to be rationed regardless of the system. The benefit of letting prices in a free market economy ration health care is that individuals will do this themselves, opting out of the most questionable, unnecessary procedures and driving prices DOWN by shopping for health care pricing competitively. Insurance may still be a major player, but a consumer being required to do some due diligence and assuming some of the financial burden of maintaining their health will likely reduce the cost of even this necessity.

I believe we should go back to health insurance primarily as a catastrophic safety net, as it was years ago. Paying cash for routine checkups at the doctor and dentist makes these services cheaper for every one.




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